



# Word from the Herd

Louisa Veterinary Service

*Spring 2020*

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## Louisa Veterinary Service and COVID-19

We are open for business as usual. The physical office is being manned by Ce, while Jess and Julie are working from home. Dr. Melinda and Dr. Sarah are on the road handling calls with their assistants, Heidi and Roxanne, although we do not dress quite like the picture below.

If you need to pick up medication or to drop off samples or payments, please call ahead. To comply with social distancing recommendations, we are using the cooler by the garage door to make these exchanges.

We are aware that the stay at home orders and business shutdowns may have adversely impacted some folks. If you find yourself in a financial bind, please contact our office and we will work out a payment arrangement that works for both of us. In the meantime, **stay safe and stay healthy**. A big thank you to all of you farmers who continue to provide us with a safe and healthy food supply even in the face of a global pandemic!



## FAQ's regarding COVID-19

### Can animals get coronaviruses?

Yes, for years cats have been affected by a type of coronavirus that causes a disease called Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP). This is a nasty disease, however, different than COVID-19. Recently, a tiger at the Bronx zoo and a few other lions had symptoms of COVID-19 and tested positive. All have recovered and are doing well. There is no evidence that animals play a role in the transmission of COVID-19 to people other than the initial event in the Wuhan market, and no evidence that any person has been infected with COVID-19 in the US by animals, including by pet dogs or cats.

You may have noticed that we vaccinate some cattle, mostly on dairy farms, for coronavirus. The type of coronavirus that affects cattle is a GI virus and causes bloody diarrhea and systemic illness. It is a different type of coronavirus from COVID-19.

### How is COVID-19 affecting agriculture?

I am quite sure you all are reading the farming magazines so I will only briefly answer this with what I am seeing locally. Our dairy farmers are getting a drop in milk price each month with the lowest prices expected in the fall. None in the area so far have been forced by their milk cooperatives to dump tanks of milk on the farm.

As far as the meat production goes, the fat cattle are currently not being processed due to major back ups at the processing plants. There are also back ups with the poultry and swine plants. This is a downside of vertical integration. Many of you will begin to understand this when you attempt to get these 4-H animals processed this year. At most of the USDA facilities the soonest processing dates for animals are in 2021.

## Producer Survey on Pinkeye



Fly season is beginning again and with fly season comes pink eye. Pink eye arises from an irritation of the eye that allows an overgrowth of bacteria on the eye making the eye appear infected. Flies can carry the bacteria that cause pink eye on their feet. Good fly control in addition to bush-hogging tall grasses, trimming low hanging trees, and removing debris helps reduce the incidence of pink eye.

### Who did we survey?

We recently interviewed **8 of our cattle producers** to see what they have found to be effective in preventing and treating pink eye.

A total of **1302** cattle are represented in the survey. Herd size ranges from 15 to 340 animals Most of the producers who responded have Angus or Angus crosses, though Hereford and Santa Gertrudis crosses are also breeds that are represented.

### What type of fly abatement strategies did they use?

**5 out of 8** respondents apply **fly tags** in the spring to early summer. Only **2** rely on **topical products** only and **1** uses no fly tags or chemicals at all. **4 of the 5** using fly tags also use a topical product such as a **pour-on or back rub**. All **7** producers using fly tags, pour-on products or back rubs, **alternate** their fly control chemicals every 1-2 years.

Those who used the topical products reapplied them 2-3 times a year or as needed depending on the number of flies on the cattle.

Generally, the producers found the **products they used worked for 1-3 years**. Only one felt what he used was effective for “only a month or so” and another did not feel the label was a good indicator of how long the product would work.

### **Did they use pinkeye vaccine?**

**7 out of 8 producers** are using the Central Virginia Autogenous Pinkeye vaccine. The one that is not currently using the vaccine, has used it for the past 15 years. Only two producers booster the vaccine.

The **incidence of pink eye** in these herds ranged from **0 to 10%**, with **NO** cattle losing an eye to the disease. That means 1,302 cattle have vision in both of their eyes after the past few pinkeye seasons.

The producer who does not use fly tags or other chemicals only uses the Central Virginia Autogenous Pinkeye vaccine and feels that alone has reduced their incidence of pink eye from about 70% to less than 1%.

### **What other preventative measures did they take?**

Some producers are **mowing** fields, feeding a **mineral with an additive** for fly control, reducing fly loads by keeping lots **clean** and dry, giving cattle adequate **shade**, and **spraying** cattle when the producer begins seeing groups of flies on the cattle.

### **Do you have any tips for your fellow producers?**

If you see eye irritation beginning, all the producers agree that **starting treatment as soon as possible** leads to a better outcome. As one producer said “Continue practices even if you see some cases. Don’t quit thinking the cause is lost.” Being a **good steward** to your cattle and **monitoring them closely** will give you the best success.

Not only is it time to think about fly control, it’s also time to be thinking about tick control. The same products that help control flies, help to control ticks.

LVS would like to thank the 8 producers who participated in our survey! We know your time is valuable and we appreciate your experience based feed back. Hopefully it will help other producers in making decisions regarding pinkeye prevention in his/her herd.



## Cache Valley Fever

(caused by Cache Valley virus)

This virus has reared its ugly head here recently in Central Virginia. Here are the quick and dirty things you should know about this virus:

- This is a native, vector-borne virus **transmitted by mosquitos** that causes infertility, abortions, stillbirths and congenital abnormalities in **sheep and goats**
- There is **NO animal to animal** transmission and **NO animal to person** transmission
- Infection usually occurs during the first 2 months of pregnancy.
- Non-pregnant females and females further along in gestation do not appear to be affected
- Testing aborted fetal fluid or tissues is the most reliable. A positive blood test can indicate exposure but not necessarily infection.
- **Minimize standing water** to decrease the mosquito population in the area. Remember mosquito season extends into the fall.
- There is **no effective vaccine or treatment** for this disease
- Give the office a call if you see strange stillborn, or aborted lambs/kids on your farm



# ONLINE HEALTH PAPERS

Do you have stock moving out of state to new owners or to sales? Are you dreaming ahead to when the livestock shows reopen? If you can answer yes to either of those questions, please check out the **forms section** on our website. The USDA and the states are asking veterinarians to transition to online health certificates. To make that transition happen, we have designed a **new form** that includes all the information that is required by the online system.



The new form asks for much more detailed information about the animal's movement than previously. All the information on the new form is required by the online system, so each box must be completed. The beauty of the system though, is that once an owner and animal are entered into the online data base, it becomes much easier to prepare additional health papers. The system will remember each producer and each animal entered.

Requirements for those states that require entry permits, special testing, or vaccinations have not changed. Please call in advance of the animal's travel, especially if travelling out of the state, so that we can check those requirements for you!

If you would like to get your basic information into the system in anticipation of being able to travel, please complete the new form and email it back. We will get your information entered in the online system so you will be ready to go when restrictions are lifted.